



State of Maryland

Advisory Council on Mental Hygiene/Planning Council

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – John M. Colmers, Secretary, DHMH

November 29, 2010

Barbara Orlando
Grants Management Specialist,
Division of Grants Management, OPS,
SAMHSA (RM 7-1091)
1 Choke Cherry Road
Rockville, MD 20857

RE: FY 2010 Community Mental Health Services Block Grant Implementation Report Review

Dear Ms. Orlando:

In compliance with the Application Guidance and Instructions FY 2009-2011, the Maryland Advisory Council on Mental Hygiene/PL 102-321 Planning Council (Joint Council), through its Planning Committee, has participated in the review of Maryland's Implementation documents for the FY 2010 Annual State Mental Health Plan and Community Mental Health Block Grant. We are pleased to provide the following comments on the report.

The Planning Committee of the Joint Council met on November 16, 2010 and reviewed the FY 2010 State Mental Health Plan Implementation Report (which contains Maryland's Block Grant Strategies), the FY 2010 Mental Health Block Grant Spending Report, the Performance Indicators, and the MHBG Report Summary sections. The review consisted of discussions of State activities and strategies implemented to accomplish the objectives. Activities addressing the need for ongoing collaboration among State agencies, consumers, families, advocates, mental health providers, and public and private organizations were well documented. Additionally, the Committee reviewed the information and data reported in the FY 2010 Uniform Reporting System tables.

The Planning Committee is pleased to note that the FY 2010 implementation report was a reader friendly document that outlined accomplishments and progress on strategies which further strengthened consumer leadership and participation in the Public Mental Health System (PMHS) including funding for peer support activities, training, and public awareness activities by consumer, family, and other advocacy organizations.

Other significant issues and recommendations identified by the Planning Committee are as follows:

Highlights:

- Recent Joint Council presentations have focused on the activities leading to implementation of Health Care Reform in Maryland, and the proposed impact on MHA's commitment to maintaining access to the Public Mental Health System for individuals with serious mental illness and serious emotional disorders. The Council is updated on the efforts of Maryland's Health Care Reform Coordinating Council.
- Review of MHA's implementation report demonstrate that despite budget reductions resulting in the closure of state hospital facilities and reduction in inpatient services, the total number of individuals served in the PMHS increased to over 120,000 in FY 2010.
- A most noteworthy accomplishment is the implementation of two SAMHSA System of Care grants: Maryland CARES, with a special focus on children and youth in foster care in Baltimore City; and RURAL CARES in nine (9) eastern shore counties using Care Management Entities (CMEs) and High Fidelity Wraparound processes.
- This year's accomplishments included receipt of SAMHSA's ECCO (Excellence in Community Communications and Outreach) award for the Maryland System of Care Program, MD CARES, recognizing activities surrounding Children's Mental Health Awareness Week including: National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day, Media Outreach, and Community Outreach to Parents & Caregivers. Honored activities included: Television Public Service Announcements (PSAs), Teacher Resource Kits, and Family Day in Annapolis.
- We strongly support efforts to maintain access to services for individuals with co-occurring needs for treatment for both substance abuse and mental illness and look forward to advancing towards a more proactive focus on strengthening collaborative planning and coordination of care for Marylanders with co-occurring disorders and forensic issues.
- We recognize the positive impact of the SOAR training activities that provide an in-depth, step-by-step explanation of the SSI/SSDI application and disability determination process and provide strategies for case managers, mental health professionals, and social workers assisting individuals who are homeless with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance use disorder to successfully access SSI/SSDI benefits.
- Employment for individuals with mental illness continues to be ranked as a top priority by Maryland consumers. We are proud of MHA's collaborative work with the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) to increase employment opportunities through evidence-based practices in supported employment, as well as efforts with Maryland Department of Disabilities to expand access to the Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program (EIDP), and increase consumer's array of choices, through implementation of Maryland's Employment Network (EN).

Recommendations:

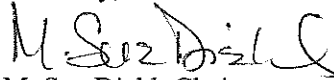
- The continued support of the Maryland Child and Adolescent Mental Health Institute to further develop and disseminate evidence based practices (EBPs) for Children & Adolescents including, treatment foster care, high fidelity wrap-around, trauma informed care, functional family therapy and multi-systemic therapy; and research best practices in psychiatry to address the reduction of negative side effects of medication and prevention of obesity and morbidity for children in the child welfare system.
- The Joint Council recommends that MHA maintain as a high priority, strategies that support the development of a continuum of affordable and safe housing. This includes collaborative planning and implementation with the CSAs, local housing authorities and housing developers.

- We urge continued support for the ongoing implementation of telemental health to improve access in rural communities where telepsychiatry program allow individuals to consult with a psychiatrist in Baltimore without traveling from their home communities.

Further, the Joint Council commends MHA's ongoing efforts to improve the state's planning process and observed that MHA successfully revised the State Plan Goals to incorporate *SAMHSA's Strategic Initiatives*. As the nation moves in the direction of a recovery and resiliency-oriented, consumer and family driven mental health system, Maryland has taken the lead in facilitating the change in behaviors and attitudes necessary for transformation Statewide.

Finally, to build upon the achievements of this year, the Joint Council will continue its advocacy in support of the continued transformation of Maryland's Public Mental Health System and for the necessary funding to continue to meet the needs of Maryland's citizens. The Planning Committee expressed appreciation for the work of MHA staff in producing the implementation reports, spending plan summary, and wealth of mental health data. In summary the Joint Council is proud of its continuing participation in the ongoing evolution of the PMHS and endorses this FY 2010 Mental Health Block Grant Implementation Report.

Sincerely,



M. Sue Diehl, Chair
Maryland Advisory Council on
Mental Hygiene/PL 102-321 Planning Council

cc: The Honorable Martin O'Malley, Governor
John M. Colmers, Secretary, DHMH
Renata Henry, Deputy Secretary for Behavioral Health and Disabilities
Brian Hepburn, M.D., Executive Director, MHA